

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 /062 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6126

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3592

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, JM

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM BEGINS JULY 7

1. THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT'S PROMISED "CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME" WILL BE INAUGURATED ON JULY 7 AT A RALLY TO BE HELD IN MORANT BAY, A TOWN 32 MILES EAST OF KINGSTON WHICH WAS THE SCENE IN 1865 OF A REVOLT AGAINST COLONIAL RULE. THE MAIN SPEAKER AT THE RALLY WILL BE PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY. A SERIES OF "LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS" WILL PRECEDE THE RALLY, AND ARE INTENDED TO ILLUMINATE PAST AND PRESENT PROBLEMS REQUIRING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

2. THE "CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME" IS TO BE SPREAD OVER TWO YEARS, AND WILL INVOLVE MUCH PUBLIC EDUCATION (CRITICS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT USE THE TERM "MANIPULATION"). THERE WILL BE AN ELABORATE PROCESS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND CONSULTATIONS, CULMINATING -- ACCORDING TO CURRENT PLANNING -- IN A REFERENDUM TO APPROVE A PROPOSED TEXT. FOLLOWING THIS, PARLIAMENT WILL ENACT THE

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NEW CONSTITUTION. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT'S THINKING REMAINS TO BE MORE FULLY REVEALED, IT IS PRESENTLY CLEAR THAT THE INTENTION IS TO TRANSFORM JAMAICA INTO A REPUBLIC. HOW EXTENSIVELY THE LEGISLATURE WILL BE RECONSTRUCTED AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EXECUTIVE ALTERED REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION THAT THERE WILL BE SOME EROSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS, BUT IN THE AREA OF

PROPERTY RATHER THAN PERSONAL RIGHTS.

3. THE GENERAL BELIEF HOLDS THAT WHEN THE PROCESS IS COMPLETED, JAMAICA WILL HAVE MOVED SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE LEFT. THIS VIEW IS STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT SENATOR PAUL MILLER, A WELL-KNOWN JAMAICAN LEFTIST, IS RESPONSIBLE AS A PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROGRAM. MOREOVER, THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MORANT BAY RALLY GIVE ADDED CREDENCE TO THIS VIEW. INCLUDED ARE HUGH SMALL, MINISTER FOR YOUTH, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; DR. TREVOR MUNROE, UNIVERSITY LECTURER, TRADE UNIONIST AND COMMUNIST; AND DR. PAUL ROBERTSON, AN ARDENT LEFTIST. ORGANIZATION OF THE MORANT BAY RALLY HAS BEEN THE JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF MILLER'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM DIVISION IN THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND DR. D.K. DUNCAN'S MINISTRY OF MOBILIZATION.
DORRANCE

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